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Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

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Implementation Review Group
First resumed ninth session
Vienna, 3–5 September 2018

Draft report of the Implementation Review Group on its first resumed ninth session, held in Vienna from 3–5 September 2018

Addendum

I. Introduction

A. Opening of the session

1. The Implementation Review Group of the United Nations Convention against Corruption held its first resumed ninth session in Vienna from 3 to 5 September 2018.

2. The Implementation Review Group held five meetings, which were chaired by Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain).

3. The representative of the European Union, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, noted that corruption was a threat to democracy, good governance and fair competition and that it undermined the rule of law and the fundamental values on which societies were based. He referred to the need for stronger judicial systems that would enforce laws and work towards a more peaceful and just society, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Sustainable Development Goal 16. Moreover, the representative noted that transparency, accountability and the fight against corruption were key principles guiding EU action and referred to the European Union's action to inter alia reinforce its rules against money-laundering in order to better address issues of beneficial ownership and due diligence. The representative reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to the Implementation Review Mechanism. He emphasized the importance of cooperation between UNODC and other relevant secretariats, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Organization of American States. In this regard, the representative welcomed resolution 7/4 of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption on "Enhancing synergies between relevant multilateral organizations responsible for review mechanisms in the field of anti-corruption", while also encouraging the secretariat to ensure its effective implementation. Furthermore, the representative acknowledged that additional efforts had been made between those secretariats and that new cooperation arrangements could lead to improved cooperation in areas such as improving data collection, sharing of information, as well as enhancing performance through training. Reference was also made to the streamlining of

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schedules of the different monitoring bodies, the need to avoid duplication, reduce the overall workload and prevent inadvertent increases in cost. The representative expressed the hope that strengthening the cooperation and coordination among the secretariats of anti-corruption monitoring bodies would contribute to the deepening of global efforts in the fight against corruption.

B. Attendance

4. The following States parties to the Convention were represented at the meeting of the Implementation Review Group: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

5. The European Union, a regional economic integration organization that is a party to the Convention, was represented at the meeting.

6. In accordance with Rule 2 of resolution 4/5, the Conference decided that intergovernmental organizations, Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system may be invited to participate in the sessions of the Implementation Review Group.

7. The following Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system were represented by observers: Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

8. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), and International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

9. The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, an entity maintaining a permanent observer office at Headquarters, was represented.

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III. Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

1. A representative of the secretariat provided an update on the progress made in the country reviews of the first and second review cycles. With regard to the first review cycle, she highlighted that, at the time of reporting, 179 States parties under review had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 171 direct dialogues (158 country visits and 13 joint meetings) had taken place, and 164 executive summaries had been finalized. The finalization of several other executive summaries was imminent. The representative of the secretariat also provided to the Group information on the languages used in country reviews conducted during the first cycle and, in this context, referred to the limited ability to draw meaningful conclusions from such an analysis in view of several factors, such as the random nature of the drawing of lots, the possible results of efforts to avoid reviews conducted in more than one language, the size of the respective regional groups and the number of languages used by members of those groups.

2. Regarding the second review cycle, the representative informed the Group that all the 77 States parties under review in the first and second years of the second cycle, had nominated their focal points. Furthermore, during the first two years of the second cycle, 58 States had submitted responses to the self-assessment checklist, and 51 direct dialogues (50 country visits and one joint meeting) had taken place, while several other country visits were at various stages of planning. At the time of reporting, eleven executive summaries had been finalized and several additional executive summaries were being completed. Owing to the organization of training events at early stages of the review cycle, the majority of States parties under review in the second and third years of the second cycle had nominated their focal points well before the start of their reviews, and States parties had the opportunity to engage in early preparation of their self-assessment checklists.

3. During the Group's 9th Session in June 2018, the Secretariat had highlighted how the number of reviews finalised under the second cycle remained insufficient to

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allow for a more in-depth analysis. The representative of the Secretariat underscored how the delays encountered primarily in the second year of the second review cycle continued to remain a source of concern. Only five new self-assessment checklists had been received since the Group's ninth session in June and two new executive summaries had been published. The secretariat once again urged States parties to make a greater effort to adhere to the timelines set forth in the Terms of Reference of the Mechanism.

4. During the ensuing debate, several speakers expressed their commitment to the Implementation Review Mechanism and noted their countries' continued efforts to move forward with their respective reviews. Several speakers highlighted the role of the Mechanism in assisting States in identifying shortcomings and good practices and in enhancing international cooperation. Some speakers noted that, although the task of filling out the self-assessment checklist was challenging and time consuming, which contributed to the delays in the reviews, such issues could be resolved within the existing framework. Reference was made to the level of the government at which the completed self-assessment checklists were being validated, including ministerial level committees, as well as presidential validation. Some speakers expressed the view that validation of the information at the highest possible level could be considered as a good practice as it manifested the commitment of the Government to the full implementation of the Convention and the Mechanism. Many speakers expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the Secretariat to advance the review process and to facilitate the finalization of country review reports.

5. The uniqueness of the Convention and of its Implementation Review Mechanism, which has been established as an important tool in facilitating the effective implementation of the Convention, was highlighted. A number of speakers reiterated the importance of the guiding principles of the Mechanism in building trust and confidence and referred, in particular, to its intergovernmental nature, integrity, impartiality and technical nature as being key to the success of the Mechanism. In this regard, one speaker referred to the importance of adhering to the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States parties.

6. Speakers emphasized the peer review aspect of the process as also being critical to the Mechanism's continued success and urged States to ensure the nomination of experts with relevant expertise to conduct the reviews. Most speakers noted the roles of their States as both reviewing States parties and States parties under review as being mutually reinforcing. One speaker stressed that it is the task of the reviewing States parties to evaluate compliance and reminded the States parties under review to provide timely, accurate and clear information so as to ensure that reviews accurately capture accomplishments and technical assistance needs. A number of speakers also encouraged States to finalize and/or publish their full reports and self-assessment checklist on the UNODC website.

7. Several speakers explained how their States had established special national follow-up committees and inter-institutional coordination networks to monitor and ensure the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations stemming from their reviews. One speaker indicated that, although his country's review was still in the final stages, a public debate had already been scheduled to share the findings with the public and national institutions. Another speaker suggested that a specific panel discussion be organized on the technical assistance that had been sought or provided in following up on such recommendations. Another speaker encouraged States parties to continue implementing recommendations emanating from their country reviews conducted in the first cycle and noted that technical assistance may be required by those States in this regard.

8. Several speakers noted the importance of the Convention as a legal basis for seeking international cooperation. One speaker explained how his country viewed the second cycle of the Mechanism as paving the way for enhanced asset recovery through international cooperation and technical assistance. Several regional anti-corruption events were mentioned as examples of joint anti-corruption efforts,

including inter alia the Arab Integrity and Anti-corruption Network, which met in Baghdad on 30 June 2018; the African Union "African anti-corruption year" and the meeting in Nouakchott in June 2018; and, the newly established European Union integrity network. The importance of enhancing synergies among the various review mechanisms was also referred to by a number of speakers. One speaker explained how her country had urged the Mechanism for Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) to enhance synergies with the various anti-corruption review mechanisms. The importance of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular of its Goal 16, in the context of anti-corruption efforts, was highlighted by some speakers.

9. One speaker recommended that the secretariat continue the practice of allotting a full day to the civil society briefing held on the margins of the Group in line with resolution 4/6 of the Conference of the States Parties and expressed the view that civil society participation during the meetings of the Group during its consideration of the item on technical assistance on its agenda could be a positive step to building confidence and allow States parties to benefit from the expertise of those organizations providing on-the-ground assistance.

10. One speaker suggested that, in future, in order to focus the substantive deliberations of the Group, the secretariat send to States parties substantive questions or subjects on which it would wish to seek comments or proposals from States.

11. The Secretary of the Conference acknowledged with gratitude the appreciation that States had expressed for the work undertaken by the secretariat in support of the Implementation Review Mechanism. He noted that the Group was paving the way towards examining the performance of the Mechanism in more detail, a process, which required more information, with the pace, to date, having largely been established by the reviews conducted in the first cycle. He also noted that the Mechanism's foundational documents defined the objectives that needed to be achieved and that an initial analysis of the performance of the Mechanism needed to take those objectives into account. He acknowledged that the limited information which was currently available as regards country reviews during the second cycle was due to the complexity and wider scope of Chapters II and V of the Convention. Furthermore, the Secretary noted that the calls on States parties under the review and reviewing States parties had not yielded sufficient results and stressed the need to adhere to the indicative timelines contained in the Terms of Reference.

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IV. Review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

A. Drawing of lots

1. In the first review cycle, the Group drew lots for the reviewing States for Chad, which acceded to the Convention after the drawing of lots conducted at the ninth session of the Group, held from 4 to 6 June 2018, and Equatorial Guinea, for which the Convention had entered into force after the drawing of lots conducted at the ninth session of the Group. Congo and Niue were drawn as reviewing States for Chad. Guinea-Bissau and Chad were drawn as reviewing States for Equatorial Guinea. In the second review cycle, Dominica was drawn as the other reviewer for Saint Lucia. Provisional redraws were carried out in cases in which reviewing States could defer acting as reviewers in accordance with the terms of reference of the Mechanism and could not be reached for immediate confirmation of their readiness to conduct the reviews.

B. Second cycle: trends in reviews

2. A representative of the secretariat briefed the Group on the latest trends in the thematic findings emerging from the completed reviews of the second cycle, building on the thematic reports on the implementation of chapters II and V of the Convention that had been prepared for the ninth session of the Implementation Review Group (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/6, CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/5) and taking into account country reviews that had been completed since the drafting of the thematic reports. In accordance with the thematic focus of the session, the presentation focused on trends and findings identified in the implementation of chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention.

3. The secretariat informed the Group that five additional executive summaries had been finalized since the June session of the Group, bringing the overall number of completed reviews to 11. Despite almost doubling the number of completed reviews,

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the overall trends identified previously had remained consistent, although some new nuances had emerged. In terms of the number of recommendations issued, challenges were most often encountered with respect to the Public sector (article 7 of the Convention), Codes of conduct for public officials (article 8) and the Private sector (article 12). The speaker highlighted that compared with the last update to this Group, challenges were more frequently identified in respect of codes of conduct for public officials (article 8) than in regards to public procurement and the management of public finances (article 9), although article 9, together with measures to prevent money-laundering (article 14) continued to receive a high number of recommendations. The highest number of good practices identified was in the participation of society in anti-corruption efforts (article 13 of the Convention). Many country reviews highlighted the important role played by civil society in governmental decision-making processes. Article 5 on preventive anti-corruption policies and practices was another article for which a high number of good practices were identified, including for the strong involvement of society in the establishment of national strategies and policies and a broad range of activities and measures taken by States parties to prevent corruption.

4. In regards to the first review cycle, the speaker updated the Group on the ongoing work to develop a *Set of non-binding recommendations and conclusions based on lessons learned regarding the implementation of chapters III and IV of the Convention* (CAC/COSP/2017/5). The relevant paper had been prepared for the 8th session of the Group and submitted to the Conference (CAC/COSP/2017/5) on the basis of Conference resolution 6/1. Based on the positive feedback received from States parties in their written submissions and during the 8th session of the Group, the speaker noted that the secretariat will again circulate the paper for written comments after the session. The paper will also be made available for further discussion during the second resumed session of the Group in November, which has on its agenda the topics of criminalization, law enforcement and international cooperation, with a view to the eventual submission of the paper to the Conference, in accordance with para. 11 of Resolution 6/1.

5. In the ensuing discussion, speakers expressed appreciation for the thematic analysis on the outcome of the second review cycle and encouraged the secretariat to continue to update the reports as more country reviews are completed. Speakers recognized that the thematic reports helped States to prepare or benchmark reviews and to assess progress, taking into account experiences, good practices, challenges and lessons learned by other States. In this context, some speakers expressed appreciation for the analytical value of the good practices highlighted in the reports and encouraged the secretariat to continue to compile and make available meaningful and detailed information on good practices identified in the second review cycle for future sessions of the Group. One speaker noted the distinction between recommendations issued under mandatory and non-mandatory provisions of the Convention and encouraged reviewers to take this into account in formulating recommendations.

6. Regarding preventive measures, several speakers underscored the importance of political will, which had been translated into various legislative, institutional and policy-related measures and initiatives (including in some cases through provisions in the national constitutions), both in preparation for and following the reviews. For example, a number of speakers reported on the development of national anti-corruption policies and strategies that had been prepared through extensive consultations with public and non-public stakeholders across a wide range of sectors. The benefits of awareness-raising and dissemination of such information was highlighted. One speaker also noted the importance of developing an evidence base of corruption and reported on corruption risk assessments undertaken in his country to reduce vulnerabilities to corruption.

7. Speakers also reported on legislative, regulatory and administrative mechanisms to prevent and detect conflicts of interest, including financial disclosures or asset and gifts declarations, which had proven to be useful tools in the detection and prosecution

of corruption and illicit enrichment, together with accompanying programmes of ethics education, training and guidance aimed at establishing a culture of integrity. Speakers further reported on measures undertaken towards the prevention of money-laundering and the confiscation of corruption proceeds, such as beneficial ownership transparency and steps to create registers of relevant beneficial ownership information.

8. Turning to other areas under chapter II, some speakers highlighted reforms in the area of public procurement, including e-procurement initiatives to make the public tendering process more efficient and transparent. Several speakers also highlighted reforms pertaining to access to information, information technology and open data, including the development of new laws coupled with procedures and administrative arrangements, such as monitoring mechanisms, inter-governmental coordination arrangements and action plans to implement the Open Government Partnership. The overall importance of inter-agency coordination in the prevention of corruption was highlighted and several speakers reported on institutional arrangements in this regard.

9. Speakers also highlighted important developments in the areas of reporting mechanisms, witness and whistle-blower protection, codes of ethics, as well as public sector reform programmes, such as those to enhance public services delivery and measures to strengthen recruitment and training of public officials, especially in areas considered vulnerable to corruption.

10. A number of speakers highlighted the important role of non-governmental stakeholders, in particular civil society, the private sector, academia and the media, in the prevention of corruption, underscoring their significance to national efforts to enhance integrity, accountability and transparency. Their valuable contribution to country reviews including in country visits was noted, together with other international efforts, such as the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group, to support effective implementation of chapter II. Cooperation agreements to enhance regional and international cooperation to prevent and counter corruption were also referred to.

11. Several speakers described measures to create or strengthen specialized bodies to prevent and counter corruption and efforts to strengthen institutional mechanisms. For example, an expert group meeting had been held in July 2018 bringing together international experts to discuss how to promote and strengthen anti-corruption authorities and develop commentary on the Jakarta Principles for Anti-Corruption Agencies. Speakers noted that the above-referenced initiatives had led to a greater number of investigations and prosecutions being filed in the courts. A few speakers also reported on the establishment of specialized courts to hear corruption and economic crime cases, which had led to their swifter adjudication.

12. Some speakers highlighted measures taken to prevent corruption in the private sector, which had emerged as a priority area in the second cycle in terms of the number of recommendations issued under article 12 of the Convention and the absence of any identified good practices to date. One speaker suggested including the topic in the future work plan of the Working Group on Prevention. In the discussion, one speaker highlighted work that had been done to promote public-private partnerships under an integrity project involving several States with a special focus on the exchange of information in the public sector and the development of a communication platform. Another speaker highlighted the need for more data on how States had implemented article 12, to allow for further exchange of good practices.

13. In addressing the outcomes of the 2nd cycle review, one speaker reported on plans to conduct a public discussion to follow up on the review results, to encourage information exchange, to identify reform areas and to ensure that the recommendations are implemented promptly.

14. Speakers welcomed the exchange of experiences and good practices afforded through the country reviews and in the context of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference in these areas.

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V. Technical Assistance

1. In resolution 6/1, the Conference requested the Secretariat to structure the provisional agendas of its subsidiary bodies in such a way as to avoid the duplication of discussions, while respecting their mandates. Therefore, and in line with the thematic focus of the first resumed ninth session of this Group, a representative of the Secretariat presented an oral briefing on both the technical assistance needs identified in the country reviews, as well as technical assistance provided by UNODC in relation to the implementation of Chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention. Reference was also made to the Background Note by the Secretariat for the upcoming ninth session of the Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption entitled "Status of implementation of Conference resolutions 7/5 entitled "Promoting preventive measures against corruption" and 7/6, entitled "Follow-up to the Marrakech declaration on the prevention of corruption" (CAC/COSP/WG.4/2018/4).

2. Based on an analysis of the information contained in the eleven finalized country reviews conducted in the second cycle, the representative of the secretariat explained that seven of those contained technical assistance needs. Of the needs identified, nearly two thirds related to Chapter II (Preventive measures) and one third to Chapter V (Asset recovery) of the Convention. Some trends echoed those already identified during the first review cycle, such as the needs for legislative assistance, as well as institution- and capacity-building. New trends highlighted included the need to enhance outreach and reinforce contacts with external stakeholders, in particular the general public. These new trends can be seen as a reflection of the overall goal for all parts of society to play a role in fighting and preventing corruption.

3. In relation to technical assistance in support of the Convention, the representative outlined a number of actions taken by UNODC, including the launch of the Global Judicial Integrity Network in April 2018. Furthermore, the representative explained how UNODC had continued to support legislative drafting and pre-accession processes in 15 States. The increasing number of requests for support in drafting national anti-corruption strategies also led the Secretariat to include a new session in its Implementation Review Mechanism trainings for focal points and governmental experts in Moscow and in Panama in April 2018.

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4. Two panel discussions were organized during the consideration by the Group of the item on technical assistance.

5. During the first panel, the panellists from Belgium and Guinea spoke of how, during a focal point training held in Vienna, they had noted the complementarity in Belgium's experiences in implementing the Convention and Guinea's technical assistance needs. The two States agreed to work together to address some of Guinea's assistance needs in relation to asset management by organizing a study tour to Belgium. The panellist from Guinea explained how the visit had been very productive as the Guinean delegation had been able to meet with a wide range of counterparts. He further outlined the bilateral assistance agreements had been concluded with France and Egypt, the United States and Tunisia. Guinea had also reached out to most States parties in West Africa to enhance cooperation efforts in the area of anti-corruption within the region. In response to a question, the panellist from Belgium explained how her country believed that technical assistance should be cross-cutting and multi-faceted, as well as tailored to the specific request. She further explained that her country carried out a considerable amount of preparatory work to meet the needs identified as precisely as possible. This was done for all forms of cooperation, and the panellist explained how similar bilateral assistance was being developed for other States that had approached Belgium.

6. The panellist from the Plurinational State of Bolivia outlined his country's belief that the Mechanism was strengthening the implementation of the Convention globally. In particular, he underscored the importance of breathing life into the letter of the Convention and translate it into concrete action to prevent and combat corruption. Focusing on the Plurinational State of Bolivia's asset declaration system, the panellist outlined his country's reform efforts concerning the verification of asset declarations by introducing a system to spot-check such declarations. In this regard, he noted that over the course of the last six years, verifications of asset declarations made by 531 public officials and former public officials had taken place. The panellist highlighted that, of the 90 public officials and former public officials whose declarations were verified in 2016–2017, the declarations made by 18 officials were verified without any further observations, while 66 public officials had provided justifications with regard to the observations that had been made concerning their declarations. The declarations made by the remaining six public officials were found to contain indications of criminal liability, which were subsequently reported to the Office of the Attorney-General for further investigation and potential prosecution. Given the results obtained from the verifications, the panellist noted the importance of introducing such spot-checking systems to strengthen asset declaration systems, and underscored the need for the efficient sharing of information from various inter-agency sources such as customs authorities, property and company registers and migration authorities to allow for the meaningful and swift verification of asset declarations. In response to a question, the panellist explained that the selection of declarations to review was based on the alert of anomalies in the declarations, complaints or other alerts that were received.

7. The panellist from Sri Lanka spoke of his country's technical assistance needs in relation to the "Citizen's Charter", which was based on the recognition by his government that many public officials did not fully understand their role as public servants. In order to address this, each public institution would display a clear outline of each step of the process required to receive services from the institution. Creating a transparent process would inform public officials of what was required from them, while, at the same time, prevent opportunities for corruption. The next step would be to increase the availability of online services. By limiting the direct interaction between public servants and citizens again opportunities for corruption would be reduced. The panellist highlighted that, in order to fully implement these initiatives, Sri Lanka relied on technical assistance and expertise from abroad. While Sri Lanka had independently addressed a number of institutional and legislative challenges identified in his country, the full implementation required for public officials to be trained in order to have the required expertise. In this context, he highlighted the need

for capacity-building, training and the sharing of good practices in order to equip Sri Lanka's public officials with the technical experience and knowledge to implement the new measures in practice. He called on the international community to respond favourable to such requests for assistance.

8. The panellist from New Zealand made some general observations on the different requirements of Chapters II and V and what they might imply from a technical assistance perspective. The panellist shared his country's recent experience in acting as a reviewing State party in a second cycle country review. In this regard, he emphasized that technical assistance needs should be specific, sustainable and equitable. The panellist provided some examples of providing technical assistance by focusing on New Zealand's technical assistance to countries in the Pacific to illustrate how such an approach could work. The first example of the presentation on the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) and its strategic priority #4 "SAI Capacity and Capacity Enhanced". This priority had a twin focus on both the organizational capacity of Supreme Audit Institutions and the professional capacity of their employees. The second example focused on the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative, with the goal to build fairer societies by supporting the courts in 14 Pacific Island countries to develop more accessible, just, efficient and responsive justice services. The panellist ended his presentation by highlighting how the examples mentioned had yielded very promising positive results.

9. The panellist from Brazil introduced the "Report on technical assistance provision by G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group" (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/CRP.12). The G20 ACWG compiled inputs of all its member countries on areas where good practices could be shared with other countries in relation to the implementation of the articles in Chapters III and IV of the Convention. The report further compared the types of assistance that G20 countries could provide in relation to the technical assistance needs stemming from the first cycle reviews. During the presentation, the panellist demonstrated how Brazil as co-chair of the G20 ACWG had used the data on technical assistance needs prepared by UNODC to identify where the greatest number of needs lay. He further showed how the assistance available was then compared with the assistance needs. Furthermore, the panellist explained Brazil's efforts to reach agreement by G20 countries to post their individual responses to the questionnaire on technical assistance online. Where States have agreed to this, such information was posted by UNODC on the respective UNCAC country profile pages. It was hoped that this information could help guide technical assistance requests to the States that deemed themselves as having the capacity to provide particular expertise. During the panel, the Brazilian questionnaire was showcased by a member of the secretariat and used to exemplify the type of information that was made available online.

10. During the ensuing debate, several speakers underscored how technical assistance formed an integral part of the Convention, a feature that was unique to this Convention and to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. Several speakers emphasized that technical assistance was a key component of the Implementation Review Mechanism and, in this regard, stressed the value of the efforts undertaken by UNODC and States. One speaker referred to the need to take into account the role and function of the Group as well as to examine its work, including limitations and difficulties encountered, with a view to identifying appropriate responses to the needs for technical assistance identified in the reviews. The availability of technical assistance was seen as a pre-condition for many States to implement the recommendations emanating from country reviews.

11. While some speakers referred to their countries' technical assistance programme delivery, others identified their needs for technical assistance. One speaker noted that they had already engaged bilaterally in order to fill that gap. Other speakers welcomed the technical assistance provided by UNODC, including on capacity-building.

12. Some speakers noted that, as a consequence of the requirements set by the Convention, the recommendations by the reviewing governmental experts might

exceed the capacities of the States parties under review. This was particularly the case for developing States. In this regard, another speaker emphasized that the existence of certain institutions established in line with the Convention did not constitute a guarantee that the technical capacity to implement the institutions' mandate existed. As an example, the speaker mentioned how cash-based societies encountered challenges in implementing the asset recovery and anti-money-laundering provisions of the Convention. Another speaker mentioned how the implementation of a number of preventive measures, such as conflict of interest and asset declarations as well as on judicial integrity and transparency had been possible only thanks to the technical assistance his country had received. It was noted that technical assistance allowed for the effective implementation of the Convention and ensured the further evolution of the Mechanism.

13. The Secretary of the Conference concurred with the many speakers who had emphasized the importance of technical assistance. He referred to the specific provisions on technical assistance, which were contained in the Convention. He reminded the Group that such assistance had become inextricably linked to the Implementation Review Mechanism through the decision of the Conference of the States Parties to use the Mechanism, inter alia, for the purpose of identifying technical assistance needs. He also reiterated that UNODC was not the sole provider of technical assistance in the area of anti-corruption. In referring to the presentations and interventions, he stressed the importance of bilateral assistance and the work of other such providers in this regard.

14. Furthermore, the Secretary reiterated that special importance should be attached to directing efforts towards the identification of technical assistance needs and acknowledged particularly the efforts undertaken by developing countries in the framework of the Mechanism which represented a proportionally significantly greater investment than that made by developed countries. In this regard he reiterated the need to respond to calls for technical assistance so as not to frustrate the expectations of developing countries created by such investments. He emphasized that technical assistance needs identified through the Mechanism were benchmarked and that tangible impact and results were possible through the full implementation of the Convention. The Secretary noted the role of the Group as a forum for coordination efforts among all relevant stakeholders and that additional efforts were needed to improve information exchange and coordination. Moreover, the Secretary referred to the reforms, which were being undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and how UNODC would make efforts to ensure that the topics that continued to be discussed by the Group would find their way into the development support architecture that would emerge from those reforms.

VI. Financial and budgetary matters

15. The secretariat provided an oral update on extrabudgetary resources and expenditures incurred for the operation of the first and second cycles of the Review Mechanism as at 31 July 2018, on projected expenditures for the completion of the first cycle, and on projected expenditures for the operation of the first four years of the second cycle.

16. With regard to the regular budget resources and expenditures for the Review Mechanism in the biennium 2018–2019, the secretariat explained that this would be included in the next update on financial and budgetary matters at the second resumed ninth session of the Group while emphasizing that with the decision by the General Assembly to establish three additional regular budget posts, the regular budget costs had been capped and would not further increase.

17. With respect to the extrabudgetary expenditures for the Mechanism, the Secretary informed the Group that the total extrabudgetary expenditures amounted to US$ 9,695,600 in support of the first cycle and US$ 2,594,505 in support of the second cycle as at 31 July 2018.

18. Expressing its appreciation for the voluntary contributions and in-kind contributions received in support of the Mechanism, the secretariat informed the Group that these so far totalled US$ 14,935,600.

19. Drawing the Group's attention to the extrabudgetary funding gap, the secretariat pointed out that the voluntary contributions received so far, fully covered the estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements of US$ 10,119,300 for the completion of the first cycle, including anticipated expenditures. Furthermore, the secretariat informed the group that the estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements of US$ 4,010,900 for the first two years of the second cycle were fully covered. With regard to estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements of US$ 3,454,000 for the third and fourth years of the second cycle, the secretariat pointed out that the funding gap amounted to US$ 2,648,600.

20. While making reference to the Note by the Secretariat on Resources and expenditures for the functioning of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/4), which had been submitted to the Group at its last session, the secretariat recalled that it had already reviewed and significantly lowered the projected resource requirements for the first four years of the second cycle and that the reduced estimates were based on the assumption that the application of the cost saving measures would be continued. The secretariat concluded that it was of utmost importance that the Group continued to pursue its efforts to ensure adequate financing of the entire second cycle.

21. Several speakers expressed their appreciation for the secretariat's regular financial reporting which contributed to the transparency of the work of the Mechanism.

22. Underscoring the importance and positive impact of the Review Mechanism and the need to ensure both the successful completion of the second cycle and its sustainable financing, which was pointed out as a key condition for the smooth and effective implementation of the Mechanism, several speakers recalled their countries' past and current financial support to the Review Mechanism and announced their continued support while encouraging other States Parties to also provide voluntary contributions in support of the Review Mechanism.

23. Some speakers stated their support for the current mixed funding model, with parts of the support to and operation of the Mechanism funded from the regular budget of the United Nations and other parts from voluntary contributions, in line with resolution 3/1 of the Conference and the terms of reference of the Mechanism.

24. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the secretariat's efforts to reduce the costs of the Review Mechanism. Suggesting further cost-saving measures, speakers proposed limiting on a voluntary basis the use of languages in reviews to two, limiting the information provided in the self-assessment checklists to the essential without duplication, as well as directly bearing the costs of translating working documentation. Speakers pointed out that these voluntary cost-saving measures should not negatively affect the quality of the country reviews or prejudice the principle of multilingualism.

25. One country proposed to reduce the meeting entitlements used by the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the States Parties and invited States Parties to consider the value of a second resumed session, which might not be necessary. In this regard, the Secretary, while welcoming a review of the meeting schedule in preparation for the next session of the Conference, noted that that decision could be made only by the Conference. He further noted that any reductions in the entitlements for meetings of those subsidiary bodies would not result in savings that could be re-allocated to the Conference and its subsidiary bodies or in support of the Mechanism. In reference to the duration and agenda of the second resumed ninth session of the Group, he noted that the secretariat was considering a shorter duration of the session, without prejudice to the functions and work of the Group.

26. The Secretary acknowledged with gratitude the commitment of States to and support for the Implementation Review Mechanism, including through the provision of both financial and in-kind contributions. He noted that the secretariat continued to seek and implement cost-saving measures, while being fully committed to the principle of multilingualism and to ensuring that reviews continued to be in-depth and of high quality.

VII. Other matters

27. Under this item, one speaker, in speaking about the scheduling of the meetings held by the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of States parties, referred to the sets of draft non-binding recommendations and conclusions based on lessons learned regarding the implementation of Chapters III and IV of the Convention during the first review cycle (CAC/COSP/2017/5) and non-binding guidelines on the management of frozen, seized and confiscated assets (CAC/COSP/WG.2/2018/3, which had been considered by the Group at its regular session in June, as well as sought clarifications regarding agenda and the dates of the second resumed ninth session of the Group. In his response, the Secretary clarified that the resumed second ninth session, whose duration was under discussion, had been tentatively scheduled for the week of 12–16 November 2018 and that, in view of the resumed nature of that session, the agenda would remain the same.

VIII. Adoption of the report

28. On 4 September 2018, the Implementation Review Group adopted the report on its first resumed ninth session (CAC/COSP/IRG/2018/L.1/Add.8-11).